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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

DOCTOR JONATHAN POTTS,

BY

REV. EDWARD D. NEILL.

Box

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
DOCTOR JONATHAN POTTS,

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE HOSPITALS OF THE NORTHERN AND MIDDLE
DEPARTMENTS IN THE WAR OF THE REVOLUTION,

WITH
EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

BY
REV. EDWARD D. NEILL.

FROM THE NEW ENG. HIST. AND GEN. REGISTER.



ALBANY:
J. MUNSELL, 78 STATE STREET.
1863.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

In the month of December, 1678 (O. S.), the first European ship arrived at Burlington, New Jersey. The passengers were chiefly members of the society of Friends, and among them was Thomas Potts, the ancestor of this sketch, with his wife and children. The ship, called the *Shield*, was from Hull, England. Thomas Potts settled opposite Burlington, on the Delaware river, in Bristol township, Pennsylvania, and thus the family became one of the first English families in the latter state.¹

John Potts, the father of the Doctor, was the founder of Pottsgrove, and his large old mansion still stands. He was the owner of several furnaces and a large landed estate, and died respected and beloved,² in 1768, at the age of fifty-eight years. Four daughters and nine sons survived him.³

Jonathan was born in 1747; and on the 31st of August, 1766, in company with his friend and relation, Benjamin Rush, subsequently distinguished as one of the signers of the Declaration, and an able physician, sailed from Philadelphia, on the way to the University of Edinburgh to study medicine. While in London, Dr. Franklin gave them letters of introduction to the professors and others, and also inclosed the following paternal advice:

LONDON, Dec. 20th, 1776.

Gentlemen: With this I send you letters for several of my friends at Edinburgh. It will be a pleasure to me if they prove of use to you. But you will be your best friend if you apply diligently to your studies, refraining from all idle, useless amusements, that are apt to lessen or withdraw the attention from your main business.

This, from the character you bear in the letters you brought me, I am persuaded you will do. Letters of recommendation may serve a stranger for a day or two; but when he is to reside for years, he

¹ Thomas Potts died in Bristol in 1719, and a son, David, died in Bristol in 1730, and his children were *Thomas*, John, Jonathan, Elizabeth, Stephen, Mary, Rebecca, Nathan and Ezekiel.

Thomas became a prosperous iron manufacturer at Colebrookdale, and died in 1752. His children were Thomas, David, John, the father of Dr. Potts, and three daughters.

² His obituary is in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June, 1768.

³ The children of John Potts were:

1. Martha m. Thomas Rutter.
2. Rebecca m. Benjamin Duffield, M. D.
3. Anna m. David Potts.
4. Ruth m. Peter Lohra.
5. Samuel m. Joanna Holland.
6. Isaac m. Sarah Paul.
7. James m. Anna Stocker.

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| 8. Joseph m. | { Anna Morris.
Sarah Powell.
Ann Mitchell.
Sarah Kirkbride. |
| 9. Jesse m. | Sarah Lewis. |
| 10. David m. | Mary Ayers. |
| 11. Jonathan m. | Grace Richardson. |
| 12. John m. | Margaret Camac. |
| 13. Thomas m. | Anna Nutts. |

must depend on his own conduct, which will increase or totally destroy the effect of such letters.

I take the freedom, therefore, of counseling you to be circumspect in your behavior at Edinburgh (where people are very shrewd and observing), that you may bring from thence as good a character as you carry thither, and in that respect, not be inferior to any American that has been there before you. You have great advantages in going there to study at this time, when there happens to be collected a set of as truly great men, professors of the several branches of knowledge, as have ever appeared in any age or country.

I recommend one thing particularly to you, that besides the study of medicine, you endeavor to attain a thorough knowledge of natural philosophy in general. You will from thence draw great aids in judging well both of diseases and remedies, and avoid many errors. I mention this because I have observed that a number of physicians here, as well as in America, are miserably deficient in it.

I wish you all happiness and success in your undertaking, and remain

Your friend and humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

Before leaving his native country, with that lack of judgment that has often characterized an ardent student of nineteen, he had engaged his affections to the lady who became his wife.

Scarcely had he arrived in Edinburgh, before he received a letter from his father, stating that his "dearest Grace" was very ill, and longed to see him.

Immediately, on the receipt of this intelligence, he left Edinburgh and hastened back; but upon his arrival she had recovered, and from the family record we learn that he was married at Reading, Pa., to Miss Grace Richardson, on May 5th, 1767.

After his marriage, he became a medical student in the College of Philadelphia, and, in the summer of 1768, graduated as bachelor of physic, at the first medical commencement in America. He delivered the valedictory; and the subject seems to have been suggested by Dr. Franklin, as it was on the advantages a medical student derives from a previous liberal education in the other sciences, particularly mathematics and natural philosophy.

The medical class was ten in number, and became useful practitioners.¹

In 1771, he received the degree of doctor of medicine; Benjamin Duffield, who married his sister Rebecca, at the same commencement receiving his degree as master of arts, and delivering a poem on "Science."²

¹ The first graduates of the Philadelphia medical school in 1768, were
 B. Cowell, Bucks county, Pa. Jonathan Potts, Philadelphia.
 — Archer, New Castle " James Tilton, Kent.
 S. Duffield, Philadelphia. Nich Way, New Castle.
 H. Fullerton, Lancaster. Jonathan Elmer, West Jersey.
 David Jackson, Chester. John Lawrence, East Jersey.

² The ancestors of Dr. B. Duffield came to America shortly after Thomas Potts and family, and landed at Burlington, New Jersey. (See Smith's *History of New Jersey*.) After Penn laid out Philadelphia, Benjamin, the great grandfather of

Dr. Potts commenced the practice of medicine at Reading, in Berks county. With the deepest interest he watched the discussions that were taking place in parliament in relation to America. While his family, who had been brought up as Quakers, were much divided — his brother John being a tory judge in Philadelphia,¹ and Isaac a cold neutral, until he discovered Washington in prayer in his woods at Valley Forge² — yet he, in company with his brothers, Samuel,³ James,⁴ Thomas,⁵ and Joseph,⁶ identified themselves from the first with the friends of liberty.

With Edward Biddle and others he was in 1775 a committee of safety for Berks county, and active in stirring up the zeal of his townsmen.

The following letter, written on April 27th, 1775, addressed to him by one who omitted to sign his name, probably his brother James, or Owen Biddle, gives a most graphic description of Philadelphia after the news of the battle of Lexington :

Dear Doctor: I am extremely concerned at our friend's indisposition. Doctor take care of him and prevent exertions above his strength. We may want his services ere long.

The papers sent herewith will give you most of the account relative to the rout at Lexington, which we have received. A gentleman told me last night he had seen a letter from New York which positively mentioned the regulars to have lost 800 men, and that only 12 officers of the first brigade had returned to Boston. To-morrow we expect an exact account from Boston. Most certainly [they] have had a bitter pill.

Batt writes to his wife, "The regulars and provincials have had a brush. The king's troops were hellishly peppered but returned the compliment."

Dr. Duffield moved there, and at the age of 80, died in 1741. His tombstone is in Christ church-yard.

Edward, the father of Dr. Duffield, was a warden in Christ church, a particular friend and executor of Franklin, and one of the first members of the American philosophical society. He died on the old family place in the Manor of Moreland, Philadelphia county. His tombstone and many of his descendants, are in All Saint's church-yard, above Holmesburgh.

Dr. Benjamin Duffield finished his medical education in Edinburgh. He is said to have been the first to give public lectures on obstetrics in America. In 1793, he was one of the physicians in charge of the Yellow fever hospital in Philadelphia, and died in 1799, leaving five children. His three daughters all married office students of their father, Drs. Church, Martin and Henry Neill; the two latter from Worcester county, Maryland.

Dr. Henry Neill removed to Philadelphia and succeeded his father-in-law. He was vice-president of the College of Physicians, and died in 1845. One of his sons, John Neill, M. D., the grand nephew of Dr. Potts, at the breaking out of the rebellion, organized the military hospitals of Philadelphia, and is now a surgeon U. S. A., in charge of General hospital, Broad and Cherry streets.

¹ See Sabine's *History of Loyalists*.

² Weems's *Life of Washington*.

³ Died 1793, was a member of the first state convention.

⁴ Was a lawyer in Philadelphia, and for a time major in a battalion, of which Cadwalader was colonel.

⁵ Thomas was colonel of a Pennsylvania regiment.

⁶ Joseph was a captain.

I received last night by express a letter from Mr. Wm. Livingston, one of the Congress for New Jersey. He informs me that the people of Connecticut broke open the last mail from Boston and intercepted several letters from General Gage, by which the New Yorkers had discovered a hellish plot. He does not say what. We suppose here it must be a plan to seize the Congress. Hold yourselves and neighbors in readiness to assist us.

The New Yorkers have shut their port, seized the keys of the custom house, and armed themselves. Connecticut has sent 10,000 men to take post at King's Bridge, near New York, where it is said the troops intended to erect a fortress to cut off all communication between the N. and S. colonies. I have sent for a letter from the York Committee. If I obtain it—shall be sent herewith. We have warmed our people almost to a military phrenzy. Yesterday we had a meeting of our associators. 9,000 were present. T. M.¹ harangued them with success. We divide into wards and choose our officers to-morrow. 3 troops of light horse, 2 companies of artillery, 2 companies of riflemen, 2 companies of light infantry, are forming. The artillery and light horse form to-morrow. The horses are training. I have sent two. We have here a stable for 30.

The town is filled with companies exercising. I have attended during the last week six hours every day, and have gained some knowledge in that way.

Our artillery and powder are guarded every night by detachments from the companies already formed.

The Virginians have lost their powder at Williamsburgh. It was taken by order of the government, by a detachment of marines, from a ship of war in the night time. The people are so irritated they are marching to Williamsburgh from all the neighboring counties, and by this time have secured the Governor as a hostage, whom they are determined to keep in close custody until the powder is returned.

Fleeson is so pressed by our people that I fear that you will get neither drum nor colors for some days. I called on him last Friday; nothing done except the drum hooped. I have now sent to him. The York letter you will have with a letter from our Committee. Hold yourselves ready to march at an hour's warning. *I believe the Congress will meet in Reading.*

If you want two small iron carriage guns to exercise Johnny Miers with, send for them. They are three-pounders. The brass we shall keep. The device for your drum and colors I have not had time to complete. To-morrow Fleeson shall have them."

In the journals of Congress we find that in April, 1776, Dr. Potts petitioned to be director of hospitals for Canada, and on June 9th he was appointed as surgeon for Canada and Lake George. On the 25th of the same month he was at head-quarters in New York city, and received the following note to General Sullivan from Washington's secretary:

Sir: The bearer of this, Dr. Jonathan Potts, has been appointed to the direction of the hospital in Canada. He is a gentleman of char-

¹ The meeting of associators was on April 26th, and Thomas Mifflin, subsequently general, and then governor of Pennsylvania, was one of the speakers.

acter in every respect, and most indisputable zeal in the public cause. As such I beg leave to introduce him to your notice and acquaintance.

Wishing you all honor and success,

I am, sir, your most ob't and humble servant,

JOS. REED.

NEW YORK, June 25, 1776.

The next day, in company with General Gates, he started for the north. On arriving at Crown Point he discovered that the operations in Canada were impeded, and he became subject to the orders of Dr. Stringer, who placed him in charge of the hospital at Fort George, as the following letter indicates:

CROWN POINT, July 7, 1776.

Dear Sir : As the whole of the sick will be removed from this post to Fort George as quick as possible, and are very numerous, beg you will, with all dispatch, have the sheds on the lake shore fitted up with cribs or berths for their reception ; and hurry those that are to be built where the old fort stood, as fast as possible.

A convenient shop and a kitchen for the cook, contiguous to the principal departments, will be necessary. I expect to be over in two or three days.

A quantity of hemlock tops, if procured, will be no bad bedding, and immediately wanted. They may be gathered along the lake shore and brought in battoes.

I am, Sir, with respect,

Your most obe'dt humble servant,

SAM. STRINGER¹

Affable, jovial, of fine executive power and superior education in his profession, Dr. Potts made friends wherever he went, and was popular not only with Gates, but the whole military and medical staff, as the subjoined correspondence indicates.

Letter from H. Brockholst Livingston.

GERMAN FLATTS, July 28, 1776.

Dear Sir : While at Fort George I committed to your care the keys of several closets and what plate there was in the house. I afterwards received the General's direction to lock whatever belonged to him in a closet and take the key with me. This injunction, thro' the hurry in which I came off, slipped my memory, and did not occur to me again until my arrival at Albany, from which place I wrote you, acquainting you with the General's desire, and requesting you to secure every valuable article which belonged to the General, particularly the plate in one closet, and send me the key of it. * * * It is probable we shall not return to Fort George for a considerable while yet, before which time some articles may be pilfered, considering how much the house is exposed to soldiers and travelers, in which case I shall be censured for my negligence. Your goods and

¹ Dr. Stringer was a native of Maryland. He was at the siege of Ticonderoga when Lord Howe fell in 1758. After the French war he settled in Albany. In consequence of disagreement with congress he left the continental service in 1777. Died in Albany in 1817, aged 83.

furniture are, I hope, by this time arrived, so you will be the better able to spare what I have wrote for. The use of the other closets and rooms you can have as before.

Please to send the key to the care of Capt. Varick, the General's Secretary at Albany, by some careful person.

My patience is almost exhausted in waiting for the arrival of the Indians. We have been here a fortnight and they are not yet convened. From those who are already come, amounting to about 600, we have reason to think the meeting will be full and the conclusion favorable, as peace seems to be the wish of both Sachems and warriors. The conference, we expect, will open next Thursday. The General has received a letter from his Secretary acquainting him that a report prevails at Albany, that General Clinton, in attempting to land at Charlestown, was beat off with considerable loss, himself either slain or taken prisoner. God grant it may prove true. By express from Gen. Washington on the 26th inst., all was well at New York, and the troops impatient of action. The Jerseys, my Father writes me, is in a good state of defence; 17,000 Pennsylvania Militia are come to their assistance, with which and their own, the shore from Elizabethtown to Amboy is well secured. Present my respects to the gentlemen who compose your families. I am, Sir, with sentiments of esteem and friendship,

Yours sincerely,

HENRY B. LIVINGSTON.¹

Letter from John Trumbull.

TICONDEROGA, August 8, 1776.

Dear Sir : I have received yours of the 3rd, and should beg your pardon for not answering sooner, which I impute to negligence. I assure you nothing but the continued hurry of business has prevented me. The whole time that the two York gentlemen staid was entirely taken up in preparing returns and letters for them. I have asked the General his opinion of your proposal for discharges. He will trust you and Doct. Stringer ; he charges you to give certificates only to those whom you examine. Such as are really useless you will discharge as soon as you please, without application to any other officer ; sign your own name by the General's order. See how much confidence we put in you.

We all thank you most sincerely for the present by Capt. Collins. The vinegar is very acceptable. Beans and Potatoes ! I had almost forgot the names. Think how happy we were to see them. Majr. Pierce is quite unwell ; he was to have gone across the Lake to-day had the weather permitted. Majr. Stewart is well ; he writes you at this time. Greet kindly thy fellow laborers in the Hospitals.

I am, Doctor, your very ob't servant and friend,

J. TRUMBULL.²

¹ Henry Brookholst Livingston son of Governor William Livingston of New Jersey. Died in Washington, March 18, 1823, associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. See Holgate's *American Genealogy*, p. 191.

² John Trumbull was an aid of General Gates. He left the Army in 1777, and turned his attention to painting. The Trumbull gallery will always preserve his name.

*Letter to Doctor John Morgan, Director-General of the Medical Department of the United States.*¹

FORT GEORGE, August 10, 1776.

Dear Sir: I expected long ere this to have had Dr. McHenry at the fort with the medicines [which] I mentioned to you were to come from Philadelphia, but I am greatly disappointed at his not arriving, and what has prevented him I know not. In a letter this day received from him he informs me that he was then to set out for Philadelphia in order to procure those medicines and some mates, and mentions your kind intention of assisting him both with advice and a supply of the cortex. The distressed situation of the sick here is not to be described. Without clothing, without bedding, or a shelter sufficient to screen them from the weather, I am sure your known humanity will be affected when I tell you we have at present upwards of one thousand sick and wounded in the sheds, and laboring under the various disorders of dysenteries, bilious, putrid fevers, and the effects of confluent small pox. To attend this large number, we have four seniors and four mates, exclusive of myself, and our little shop doth not afford a grain of jalap, ipecac, bark, salts, opium, and sundry other capital articles, and nothing of the kind to be had in this quarter. In this dilemma our inventions are exhausted for succedaneums, but we shall go on doing the best we can in the hopes of a speedy supply.

Dr. Stringer left this some few days since in order to lay the situation of the hospital before his excellency, General Washington, and endeavor to procure redress. You may remember, sir, when I left New York I mentioned to you, though the resolve of Congress did not expressly say I was to be Director General of this department, yet I apprehended it was the intention of that honorable body, agreeably to my petition previous to my appointment, that I should act as such in Canada, but on this side that province I was not to supersede Dr. Stringer. As I have had since the pleasure of Dr. Stringer's acquaintance, and have been made acquainted with the resolves of Congress in his favor, I find he has power to act as Director General of the Northern Department, which I knew not before; yet I shall continue to act as director under him until the matter is otherwise settled. I can assure you Dr. Stringer's conduct here, and the regard I have conceived for him from my short acquaintance, influences me to wish he may be continued as at present, and more especially as I hope our arms will be blessed with success, and we shall once more regain Canada, when it will most undoubtedly be necessary to have two hospitals in this wide extended country. I hope ere this reaches you the line by which the different departments are to act will be fixed.

Dr. Stringer and myself had some conversation respecting the expediency of acting under a Director General of the whole continent. This the doctor was averse [to], and I mentioned some reasons which had weight with me. As you will see the doctor I need not take up your time by mentioning them; for my own part I am re-

¹ Dr. Morgan was the associate of Dr. Shippen in establishing at Philadelphia the first medical school in America.

solved to be governed by such regulations as our wise Congress shall think proper, wishing nothing more than to contribute my mite towards the relief of our once distressed country, but now the glorious, independent States of America. Pray present my respectful compliments to his excellency General Washington, and General Mifflin, and believe me to be, dear sir,

Your affectionate and most humble servant,

JON. POTTS.

Letter from John Trumbull.

My Dear Sir: Have your medicines arrived? Have Stringer and McHenry made their appearance yet? Our people fall sick by dozens, and not a pennyworth of medicine have we for them, even in the most virulent disorders.

The moment you receive any supply share it for God's sake with us; we need it *almost more* than you.

Let Doctor Stringer and McHenry know the moment they arrive, that 'tis the General's will that they come *propriis personibus* to this place *immediately*.

You know 'tis no matter whether the people die for real want of medicine, or because they think they want it—'tis death in either case.

I am, my dear doctor, in a confounded hurry,

Yours sincerely,

J. TRUMBULL.

HEAD QUARTERS, 31st August, 1776.

Letter from Dr. Tillotson.

TICONDEROGA, September 13, 1776.

Dr. Potty: I would beg leave to recommend to your consideration the disposition of your tourniquets. The General enquired very particularly into the articles I had brought with me; when finding I had none, began to squint over his spectacles at me. You might spare all but one, which will be sufficient for that place. * * * * I have the pleasure to inform you that your letters were much honored. Information respecting the fleet has arrived at headquarters; nothing remarkable since the embarkation. * * * * My compliments to Col. Gansevoort and Dr. Wemple.

Your humble servant, &c.,

THOS. TILLOTSON.

Letters from Surgeon of Arnold's Fleet.

SLOOP ENTERPRISE, 8th October, 1776.

My Dear Sir: I had the pleasure of your first favor which came to hand the 7th inst., the receipt of which gave me great satisfaction to find myself classed amongst your friends. Be assured, my most strenuous endeavors shall not be wanting to render myself worthy of your attention. * * * * I doubt not before this reaches you, you'll be acquainted with the General's intention of proceeding down the Lakes with the fleet to Isle a Motte, there to land 150 men; 50 of whom are to be Indians, who are to eat, slay and kill all they can lay hands on. I pray most honestly that the Creator of all things,

both wild and tame, would induce the enemy to come to action, as I am well assured we shall be able to extirpate them from the face of the waters. * * * * The want of a subject obliges me to immediately subscribe myself

Your most obedient friend and servant,

STEPHEN MCCA. CREA.

TICONDEROGA, October 14th, 1776.

Dear Sir: I am so hurried with getting off the wounded of our ruined navy, that it is impossible to give any account of our action, which was as bloody as unfortunate. We have done them all the surgery we could. I have just time to inform you I am alive, without receiving any wound. Please to acquaint my brother and friends as soon as possible. I shall write the first leisure.

Adieu, I am, Sir, yours, most sincerely,

S. MCCA. CREA.

After Gates joined Washington in Pennsylvania, Dr. Potts was, for a time, on duty in Philadelphia, as the following from the general orders of General Putnam, dated Dec. 12, 1776, shows: "Officers who have the charge of any sick soldiers in or near this city, and who are included in the foregoing order, are directed to make returns to Dr. Jonathan Potts, at Mr. John Biddle's, in Market street, of the numbers and places of residence of their sick, that proper care may be taken of them."

A portion of the winter of '76-77, was passed with his family in Reading; but in January he was again commissioned with the title of Director of the General Hospital for the Northern Department. He diligently entered upon his duties, and prepared for the summer campaign; and before he left for the north, addressed the following

Letter to the Medical Committee of Congress.

READING, March 9th, 1777.

Gentlemen :—Upon the first notice of my appointment to the Directorship of the Military Hospital in the Northern District, I applied myself diligently to procure such articles as were to be had and I thought necessary for the use of the General Hospital. * * * * I should have been happy to have had your instructions before I left Philadelphia, and I entreat you to forward to me whenever your other more important business will give leisure. * * * * I am clearly of opinion it will conduce much to the good of the service to have a Sub-Director appointed. Should your Honorable House approve of this measure, give me leave to recommend Doctor Warren,¹ whose good sense, long services, and zeal in the cause, entitle him to the notice of his country. I have the highest sense of the honor conferred on me by the very honorable Congress, and shall exert every nerve to merit their notice.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

Your most ob't humble servant,

JON. POTTS.

¹ Dr. John Warren was the brother and student of Dr. Joseph Warren who fell at Bunker Hill. He was also the founder of the Medical Department of Harvard University. Father of the late Dr. John C. Warren.

On the 3d of April he arrived at Albany, and as Director General of the Northern Department, had the following subordinates :

A Return of the Officers of the General Hospital, Northern Department.

General Officers.—Dr. Thos. Tillotson, Asst. Dep. Director ; Dr. Mal. Treat, Physician General ; Dr. Jas. Brown, Surgeon General ; Dr. Bartlett, Phys. and Surg. Gen. of Army ; Ad. Craigie, Apothecary General.

Senior Surgeons.—Dr. Robt. Johnston, Dr. Steph. McCrea, Dr. Dav. Townsend, Dr. Sam. McKenzie, Dr. Fran. Hagan, Dr. Jas. Young.

Second Surgeons.—Dr. Alex. Steward, Dr. Bedf. Williams, Dr. T. Vickers, Dr. Nich. Scull, Dr. Matt. Mans, Dr. Nich. Schuyler.

Surgeons' Mates.—Mr. Dav. Stoddard, Mr. James Thatcher, Mr. Sam. Woodruff, Mr. Wm. P. Smith, Mr. James Prescott, Mr. Willis Brown.

Commissary.—Mr. Dow, Mr. Henry Marselis, Asst. Com. ; Jno. Witman, Clerk ; Jno. Steward, Asst. Clerk.

Steward.—John Brown.

Letter from Dr. John Warren.

Boston, May 16, 1777.

Dear Friend : You have doubtless seen the new arrangements of Congress in the Medical Department, and have undoubtedly seen the list of gentlemen appointed General Officers in it, and I suppose you concluded that those appointments would effectually prevent my having the happiness of being connected with you in your Department.

Gentlemen, some of whom have never before been engaged in the Service, are put into places of profit and honor, whilst those who have surmounted ten thousand difficulties and exposed themselves to innumerable dangers in establishing Hospitals from a state of chaos to regularity and convenience, are overlooked.

I am not obliged to sacrifice my honor, even if it were to save a kingdom from destruction. I never will remain in any post a single moment longer than I can do it with honor and reputation. These considerations I know will be a sufficient apology to a person of your sentiments and feeling for my not attending you at your station. I am disappointed as I expected much pleasure in your acquaintance ; however, Sir, I beg you will be kind enough to write by every favorable opportunity, and believe me ready to serve you in every thing so far as lays in my power.

I am, Sir, your affectionate friend and humble servant,

J. WARREN.

Letter from Colonel Waller Stewart.

PHILADELPHIA, June 20th, 1777.

My Dear Friend : I should be happy if I had now time to write you a long letter, but my horses wait at the door and I must push after my regiment, which marched five hundred and twenty strong this morning at five o'clock. Wilkinson will show you the letter where I mention my proceedings since I left you.

Your letter to Mrs. Potts, the worthy little Mifflin,¹ sent the day

¹ " Little Mifflin " was the soubriquet of General Thomas Mifflin.

we arrived in town, and I took every opportunity in my power of handing about, through the members of Congress, your list of the sick, which gave universal satisfaction. I afterwards sent it, by particular desire, to Dr. Shippen. I shall write you fully from camp; in the mean time, allow me to refer you to my good friend Wilkinson's letter for particulars, and believe me to be

Your sincere friend,
WALTER STEWART.¹

Letter from Dr. Bartlett.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 25th inst. I have; shall comply with the requisition contained, tho' I shall be left with but two regimental surgeons in the whole army. I have this moment returned from Fort Edward, where a party of hell hounds, in conjunction with their brethren, the British troop, fell upon our advanced guard, inhumanly butchered, scalped and stripped four of them, wounded two more, each in the thigh, and four more are missing.

Poor Miss Jenny McCray and the woman with whom she lived, were taken by the savages, led up the hill to where there was a body of British troops, and there the poor girl was shot to death in cold blood, scalped and left on the ground; and the other woman not yet found.

The alarm came to camp at two P. M. I was at dinner. I immediately sent off to collect all the regular surgeons, in order to take some one, or two of them along with me to assist, but the devil a bit of one was there to be found, except three mates, one of whom had the squirts; the other two I took with me. There is neither amputating instrument, crooked needle or tourniquet in all the camp. I have a handful of lint and two or three bandages, and that is all. What in the name of wonder I am to do in case of an attack God only knows; without assistance, without instruments, without everything.

What can become of Stewart, with the stores, medicine chest, my baggage, etc.?

If it is consistent with the public good, and agreeable to your opinion, pray assist me with one or two of your surgeons. My respectful compliments to yourself and all the fraternity.

I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

JNO. BARTLETT.¹

MOSES CREEK, H'D Q'RS, }
July 26, 10 o'clock, P. M. }

Letter from Dr. Johnston, after the death of General Herkimer.

GENERAL HARCORDER'S, August 17, 1777.

Dear Doctor: Yesterday morning I amputated General Harcorner's² leg, there not being left the prospect of recovery without it. But,

¹ Stewart had been an Aid of General Gates, but became Colonel of the 13th Pennsylvania Regiment.

² Dr. Bartlett was surgeon general of the northern army. He died in Charlestown, Mass., in 1820.

³ Herkimer was in command of Tryon county militia, and was on his way to relieve Gansevoort at Fort Schuyler, when he was attacked. After he was wounded, he sat on a stump and encouraged his men to fight.

alas, the patriotick hero died in the evening—the cause of his death God only knows.

About three hours before his departure he complained of pain. I gave him 30 drops of laudanum liquid, and went to dress Mr. Pettery.¹ I left him in as good a way as I could wish, with Dr. Hastings to take care of him. When I returned I found him taking his last gasp, free from spasm, and sensible. Nothing ever more surprised me; but we cannot always parry death, so there is an end to it.

General Arnold left this yesterday, with positive orders to follow him this evening or to-morrow morning. I sent for Scull to take care of the General and Pettery. He is just now arrived. I purpose to have Pettery removed to Palentor [Palatine], where Scull and two regimental mates will take care of him and the other wounded. This evening I will pursue General Arnold, and I apprehend will overtake him at Fort Dayton.

I just now received a letter of good tidings from Doctor Treat. My best compliments to him with thanks. I hope, in a few days to have an opportunity of congratulating him and the other patriotic gentlemen in a letter, with good news from the Western Army.

The place and hour of glory draws nigh. No news from Fort Schuyler. I am, dear Doctor,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

ROBERT JOHNSTON.²

Letter from Dr. William Shippen, Director General of United States Hospitals.

PHILADELPHIA, 25th August, 1777.

My Dear Doctor: Your medicines, &c., have been ordered several weeks from Reading, and must be gone before now. I have now directed a cask of excellent wine and some spirits for your hospital, as I know a little is very necessary. The countenance of your affairs is very fair and pleasing, and all must be well if Mr. Burgoyne can be prevailed upon to come down far enough into the country. I am afraid he will retire to that important post Fortress Ticonderoga, and I am sure he will not run away from, as we have done; *perhaps* we had good reasons. Stark's affair is great, very great—pray let the honest fellows who were wounded be tenderly dressed. I expect your returns next week. Dr. Brown has my good wishes. * * * * General Washington marched at the head of near 10,000 regular troops through the city yesterday morning. To-day 2,500 more follow him towards Elk river, where Howe's fleet lies. 3,000 militia are at Chester, and in eight days the General will be able to attack the British army with 20,000 foot and 350 horse, well mounted. Howe will not dare to meet them. We all look up, and tories down. Messrs. Penn, Chew, Tilghman, E. and J.,

¹ Joseph Pettery was a nephew of the general's, a brave soldier, who, after he was wounded and his leg fractured by two bullets, killed an Indian with his own tomahawk.

² Johnston was senior surgeon from Maryland.

Shippen, J. Lawrence, J. Hamilton, gave their parole. Adieu, prosper and believe me, Dr. Potts,

Your affectionate and humble servant,
W. SHIPPEN.¹

Letter from Dr. Hagan.

BENNINGTON, Sept. 21, 1777.

Dear General: Every opportunity of writing affords me pleasure, and believe me the present situation of affairs renders me very anxious to hear from you.

I would willingly mention several things to you, but I know your mind at present is so taken up with matters of importance that you cannot attend to small affairs. It may not be amiss to mention the disagreeable situation of the wounded prisoners, which the approaching season seems to threaten every day, and I'm confident that it will be impossible to procure any other house for them than what they at present occupy.

I have discovered from the German officer, who is a cornet of horse, and left here to see the patients well treated, that the greatest discord prevails between them and the British, and he is much disobliged that General Burgoyne did not write to him, and declared to me in confidence if the Germans knew they were so much despised (as he finds they are) by the British, it would be attended with the most dreadful consequences. One night, while Bacchus made us both laugh, he told me Burgoyne had more Germans in his army than British, and if ever he lived to return, the behavior of the British officers should be no secret to General Riedesell. You must know the whole blame of the late expedition is attributed to the Germans. The British officer, who is my patient, has hinted to me that he believes General Howe and his master would be very glad if General Lee was not in their possession, and I find it is the prevailing opinion among them that very soon he will get leave to slip away. Yesterday I heard that we had taken 250 of the enemy, and when I told it to the German officer, and that they were British, he expressed the greatest satisfaction, and wished with all his soul their whole army might meet with a defeat, such is their jealousy. Believe me to be sincerely

Your humble servant,

FRANCIS HAGAN.²

Letter from British Surgeon Hayes after the battle at Saratoga.

Sir: Nothing but the hurry of business and my visit to Sir Francis Clarke³ co'd have prevented your having the enclosed returns, which I fancy are very correct, before this time.

An order from the General for me to remain at this place seems to

¹ Dr. Shippen was the son of Dr. William Shippen; graduated at Princeton, 1754; studied medicine in Edinburgh, and was the founder of the first medical school in America at Philadelphia. Dr. Potts had been one of his pupils. Died in 1808.

² Hagan was one of the senior surgeons of the northern department.

³ Sir Francis Clarke was the senior aid of General Burgoyne, and died as Dr. Hayes, the British surgeon predicted.

be almost unnecessary, as it cannot be supposed I should desert the sick and wounded left under my care, to see a Country I know nothing of. My whole time shall be devoted to their services if permitted; and I dare say my conduct will never deserve any censure from those whose orders I may happen to receive. I hope this order will not preclude me from seeing my friend Sir Francis Clarke to his last, which I fear will soon arrive.

I am, dear sir, Your most obedient and humble servant,

JOHN McNAMARA HAYES.

October 15, 1777.

Letter from Dr. James Browne.

ALBANY, December 24, 1777.

My Dear Director : In the mess the utmost harmony prevails. * * * Gen. Lincoln¹ is in a fair way of recovery. * * * In his character is united the resolution of the soldier; the politeness of the gentleman, the patient philosopher, and pious Christian.

Not so the gallant Arnold. His peevishness would degrade the most capricious of the fair sex ; nor is his wound, tho' less dangerous in the beginning than Lincoln's, in so fair a way of healing.

He abuses us for a set of ignorant pretenders and empirics. * *

I am, with all possible affection, your friend,

J. BROWNE.²

After the surrender of Burgoyne, a large portion of Gates' army reinforced Washington. The General, in concluding his letter to John Hancock, the President of Congress, announcing his victory, adds : "I cannot close my letter without requesting your Excellency to inform Congress of the good care and attention with which Dr. Pott's and the gentlemen of the General Hospital have conducted the business of their Department. I must beg that some honorary mark of the favor of Congress may be shown to Dr. Pott's and his subordinate associates."

On the 16th of November, 1777, having obtained a furlough, he left Albany to visit his wife and friends in Pennsylvania. While with his family in Reading, he was appointed by Congress, Director General of the Hospitals of the Middle Department, and also Purveyor General.

As long as the army was at Valley Forge it was compatible with his duties to live with his family at Reading, and his correspondents addressed him there, as the superscription of their letters show.

Letter from Dr. James Craik.

Dear Sir : The waggons arrived yesterday ; and the waggoner has returned back to Reading. I observe my friend Bond has not sent me any bedding, so that I am afraid I shall be at a loss when we come to march. * * * As the General has desired all the Orderlys to join their regiments by the first of June, and we have

¹ Lincoln was shot in the thigh by a sharpshooter, and Arnold in the leg while leading a charge.

² Dr. Browne was the surgeon general in the northern department, and from Maryland.

already had some suffering with some of the Colonels about them, I wish some method could be fallen on to employ women that can be depended on. The Gen'l says we may at least enlist them for the same money that soldiers are, for he can no longer bear having an army on paper, and not have them to act on the field. We still have fresh accounts of the Enemy preparing to move some where, and I believe they are going off. They are putting their horses on board, their cannon, and heavy baggage, and they seem to be in great confusion in the city. * * * I am day by day expecting the pleasure of seeing you here. Your most ob't and humble serv't,

HEAD QUARTERS, May 24, 1778.

JAS. CRAIK.¹

Letter to Dr. Wm. Shippen, Director General of Military Hospitals in the United States of America.

ALBANY, April 29th, 1777.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 18th inst., which had inclosed the resolutions of Congress, respecting the arrangement of the Hospitals in the different Departments of the United States, came to my hand on Wednesday last. * * * * * The General Hospital is to be established at Mt. Independence, for the reception of the sick of the Army at that Post, and one other at Fort George, for the reception of such as may happen to be taken with the small-pox or other putrid or infectious diseases; also a Hospital in this city for such as fall sick on their march to or from the advanced post, Ticonderoga. One preventative is worth two cures, and upon this principle I exert every nerve to preserve cleanliness, giving particular attention to the diet and method of dress, the provisions delivered to the troops, and above all, have the gardens well taken care of. * * * * * The Gentlemen appointed by Congress as Physician, Surgeon, and Surgeon General of the Northern Army, are by General Gates' express order, required to attend to their duty without delay. No excuse will be taken. I long to take Dr. Treat by the hand, the other gentlemen I know not, but am sure must be men of ability from the appointment given them. You request me, dear Doctor, to let you know my wants, and rest assured I shall do it. Tye' is most undoubtedly an unhealthy situation, owing to the stagnant water and fogs, and to avoid the effects of which we should moisten our clay now and then with some cordials or salubrious medicine. Should opportunity offer, I hope you will not forget me. One other request, I beg you not to omit—pray send me the papers. As to news, we have nothing from Canada that can be relied on. Some boats which came up Lake Champlain to procure forage at Gillillan creek, have returned.

The Copperheads² are quiet at present, but I fear they will be troublesome, having moved with their families from these parts.

I am with respect,

Your most ob't and humble servant,

JOHN POTTS.

¹ The name of Dr. Craik will always be associated with the death bed of Washington. He was a Scotchman, who came to America with Braddock's army.

² Is there any earlier use of the term Copperheads?

Letter from Dr. John Cochran.

MORRISTOWN, March 18, 1780.

Dear Sir : I received your favor by Dr. Bond, and am extremely sorry for the present situation of the Hospital finances. Our stores have all been expended for two weeks past, and not less than 600 regimental sick and lame, most of whom require some assistance, which being withheld, are languishing and must suffer.

I flatter myself you have no blame in this matter, but curse on him or them by whom this evil is produced. The vengeance of an offended Deity must overtake the miscreants sooner or later. It grieves my soul to see the poor, worthy, brave fellows pine away for want of a few comforts, which they have dearly earned.

I shall wait on his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, and represent our situation, but I am persuaded it can have little effect, for what can he do? He may refer the matter to Congress, they to the Medical Committee, who will probably powwow over it awhile, and no more be heard of it. The few stores sent on by Dr. Bond in your absence are not yet arrived. I suppose owing to the badness of the roads. If they come they will give us some relief for a few weeks.

Compliments to all friends, and believe me, Dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

JOHN COCHRAN.¹

It was not the will of Providence that Dr. Potts should live to see the independence of his country achieved, for which he so ardently longed. In the year 1781, at the early age of thirty-four, he died. His executors were his brother Samuel and his early friend General Mifflin.

The children of Jonathan and Grace Potts were:

1. Grace, married to a cousin, Wm. Potts. She died in 1809.
2. Benj. Rush Potts, born in 1768. Left home and fate unknown. Supposed to have married and lived twenty miles from Wheeling, Va., in Ohio.
3. Clement Potts, died in infancy.
4. Deborah Claypoole Potts, born 1770; died 1798; wife of Thomas Shallcross.
5. Dr. Francis Potts, born 1772 ; died about 1812.
6. Horatio Gates Potts, died in infancy.
7. Edward Potts, b. in 1780; died young.

¹ Dr. Cochrane was a native of Chester Co., Pa. Married a sister of General Schuyler, and died at Palatine, N. Y., in 1807, aged 77.

